1: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FT7 Yao FT7

I. REGION OF MOZAMBIQUE

YAO, MAKUA-LOMWE, MAKONDE

In the region between Lake Nyasa and the east coast of Africa, between the Lukuledi river in the north and the Zambezi in the south, there is a congeries of peoples whose culture is very similar over the whole area. They are the *Makonde* group, the *Yao* and the *Makua-Lomwe* peoples. Of these only the Yao has been studied in detail. The scanty information about the other inhabitants of the region will be summarized after the fuller summary of the Yao material, so that points of similarity and difference may appear more clearly. Fortunately for this procedure the Yao occupy a central position, from which they may be taken to represent in many ways the culture of the neighbouring peoples.

The *Makonde* inhabit the Makondi plateau between the Lukuledi and Ruvuma rivers (39° and 41° longitude). Closely related to them are the *Mavia*, on the plateau of that name, south of the Ruvuma; the *Mwera*, north of the Lukuledi river, on the Rondo plateau; and the *Matambwe*, in the Ruvuma valley. It is possible that the *Ngindo*, *Ndonde*, and *Ndendeule* should also be included. This group seems to be culturally and linguistically distinct in several points from the Makua and Lomwe, and the Yao, although they have in common the main features of political and social organization.

The region of the *Yao* is between the Ruvuma, Lujenda, and Luchilingo rivers. They also extend into Nyasaland and Tanganyika Territory.

The *Makua* occupy the area between the Lujenda and Lurio rivers and the coastal strip from the mouth of the Lurio nearly to Quilimano.

The *Lomwe* are sometimes regarded as a sub-branch of the Makua, but probably have as much right to be called a separate tribe as the Yao. They are bordered by the Makua on the north, east, and south, and by Maravi on the west. South of them, around Quilimano and east of the Mlanje mountains, are the *Cuabo*,[1] related to the Makua and Lomwe, and also the Podzo, on the south bank of the Zambezi delta.

The region is forested lightly or heavily, and varies in character according to the elevation, soil, and humidity. The coastal belt from Mozambique northwards has thorn-bush vegetation, thick in parts, giving way to light forest and grassland farther inland. In the uplands there is good forest, broad-leaved and evergreen, and deciduous trees near the lake district. Throughout the territory there are narrow strips of richer vegetation along the watercourses, and along the coast mangrove swamps occur at intervals. In the highlands the mornings and evenings are cool and pleasant for eight months of the year, and it is even cold at night in May and August, temperatures of 50° and 60° F. being common in the day. In the hot season the heat is severe, especially in the valley of the Ruvuma. The mean annual rainfall for Mozambique is 39·50 in. and for Likoma on the lake, 39·9 in.[2]

The people are primarily cultivators, but the Yao keep cattle in the highlands. Both Yao and Makua traded with the Arabs and were energetic slave-raiders. The coast Makua and most of the Yao are Islamized.

[1] *c-* pronounced as *ch-*.

[2] *Handbook of Portuguese East Africa*, 1920, pp. 68–77.

[P. 1]

1: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FT7 Yao FT7

All these peoples have in common the following points of social organization: matrilineal clans, matrilocal marriage, residence in small villages under independent chiefs or headmen. They have elaborate initiation schools with circumcision for boys, and initiation without an operation for girls. It is mainly by variations in the initiation rites that their cultures can be distinguished from one another. They also distinguish themselves by linguistic variations and by cicatrizations. This is the region of the *pelele*, or lip-ring, although Yao do not wear it.

THE YAO

TRIBAL AND SUB-TRIBAL GROUPINGS AND DEMOGRAPHY

Nomenclature

The name of the tribe is spelt and pronounced in a variety of different ways: Yao, Ayo, Veiao, Hiao, Wahiao, Wahaiao, Wahyao, Ayawa, Myao, Achawa, Wajao, Adjao, Mujoa, Mujanos, Adsawa, Adsoa, Mudsau. Sometimes they are referred to by the name of one of the sections of the tribe or of one of the leaders: e.g. Amachinga, Amangoche, Massaninga (also spelt Amasaninga and Amazaninga), Chiwala, Katule, Kalenje, Mdeule.[1]

Grouping

The Yao claim a hill called Yao, near Muembe, between the Rivers Lujenda and Luchilingo, as the original centre from which they dispersed. The main body of Yao is in Portuguese East Africa, and there are large settlements in Tanganyika and Nyasaland.

(*a*) *Portuguese East Africa.* The two main divisions of Yao in Portuguese East Africa are around Muembe and around Mtarika, on the Lujenda river.[2] Immediately south of the lower Ruvuma and at its mouth there are two smaller groups. The Yao occupy most of the territory between the Msinje, Luchilingo, and Ruvuma rivers in their upper courses.[3]

(*b*) *Tanganyika.* Yao entered Tanganyika Territory at two separate periods. In the 1850's they immigrated into Masasi, Chiwata, Newala, Tunduru districts and around Mikindani and Kyonga.[4] The other two groups are more recent comers: one (about 3,000), were taken as war-captives by the Ngoni in Songea district; the other (about 45,000), in the upper Lukuledi valley in Lindi district. They came in from Portuguese East Africa about 1912.[5]

(*c*) *Nyasaland.* There are four main groups of Yao:

(i) The largest group lives in the Southern Province, in upper Shire, and south Nyasa districts.

(ii) The second is near Blantyre, Chiradzulu, Zomba.

(iii) A small group is settled in a belt on the west coast of Lake Nyasa at Domira Bay.[6]

[1] Hockel, 1935, p. 7 n.; Hetherwick, 3, 1902, p. xviii; Abdullah, 1919; Burton, 1873, p. 81 n.
[2] *Handbook of Nyassa Co.*, 1898, p. 20.
[3] Johnson, W. P., 3, 1893.
[4] Weule, 1, 1909, p. 140.
[5] *Handbook of German East Africa*, pp. 56, 62.
[6] Murray, 1932, p. 246; Lawz, 1934, p. 37; Hetherwick, 4, 1927, p. 185.

(iv) Another group is on the south-west side of the lake, north of the Ngoni at Dedza and east of the Ngoni of Ncheu district.[1]

Although these are the main concentrations of Yao, smaller communities are scattered through most of the districts of south Nyasaland.

MAP SHOWING MORE IMPORTANT SITES CONCERNED WITH YAO INFILTRATION

Distribution of Yao shown as a percentage of the population of each district
(1931 Census)

Over 50%:	South Nyasa	75%	
	Upper Shire	60%	
30–40%:	Blantyre	38%	
20–30%:	Chiradzulu	26%	
	Zomba	26%	
10–20%:	Dedza	16%	
	Dowa	8%	
	Mlanje	6%	
	Cholo	5%	
1–5%:	Chikwawa	2%	
	Ncheu	1·3%	

History

Nothing is known of the history of the Yao before their settlement at Muembe.[2] Their contact with the Arab traders from the east coast had probably continued for 200 years before the Europeans arrived.[3] When Lacerda wrote in 1798 the Yao were

[1] Codrington, 1898, p. 512.
[2] Stannus, 4, 1922, p. 231; Heckel, 1935, p. 7; Murray, 1932.
[3] Livingstone in 1866 noted the strength of Arab influence.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

posed visit to the Kazembe of Luapula regions, known then as the Wisa country. It is quite obvious that the Yao were serious competitors with the Portuguese for the land trade. Laçerda writes: 175

> The dry goods hitherto imported into this country [i.e. Wisa country], have been bought by the Mujao, indirectly or directly, from the Arabs of Zanzibar and its vicinity. Hence these people received all the ivory exported from the possessions of the Casembe; whereas formerly it passed in great quantities through our port of Mozambique.[1]

It is reasonable to assume that because of their geographical position the Yao had conducted a considerable trade between the interior and the coast, mainly cloth and guns for slaves and ivory—the two were inseparable since the cheapest means of transporting ivory to the coast was by slaves. The Yao trade in slaves led to their major conflict with the British.

When Livingstone made his expedition up the Rovuma in 1866, he found abundant evidence of the influence of the Arabs. Speaking of the Yao chief Mataka, he says: 'He gave me a square house to live in, and indeed most of the houses here are square, for the Arabs are imitated in everything.'[2] Livingstone mentions in particular the trade in slaves that the Yao were conducting in Kilwa. He records that:

> The Waiyau generally are still the most active agents the slave-traders have. The caravan leaders from Kilwa arrive at a Waiyau village, show the goods they have brought, are treated liberally by the elders and told to wait and enjoy themselves, slaves enough to purchase all will be procured: then a foray is made against the Manganja who have few or no guns. The Waiyau who come against them are abundantly supplied with both by their coast guests. Several of the low coast Arabs, who differ in nothing from the Waiyau, usually accompany the foray, and do business on their own account.[3]

Even before Livingstone had made his expedition up the Rovuma Valley, there had been a large-scale movement in all directions of the Yao from their traditional home. The tradition is that the name Yao is taken from a hill, grass-covered but 175 101

[1] Burton, *Laçerda's Journey*.

[2] Waller, H., *The Last Journals of David Livingstone in Central Africa from 1865 until his Death*, John Murray (London, 1874), 73.

[3] Waller, *Last Journals*, 78.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

treeless, which is situated somewhere between Mwembe (in Portuguese East Africa) and the Luchilingo Range.[1]

It is convenient to divide the history of the Yao into two major episodes: firstly the movement from the Yao Hill to other hills, and secondly the movement into and within the Nyasaland Protectorate.

Episode I: The Scattering of the Tribes from the Yao Hill

The exact cause of the scattering of the tribes from their traditional home is not clear. Yohannah B. Abdallah suggests that it must have been some internal dissension.[2] Whatever the cause, the tribe broke up into a number of sections, each of which settled at yet another hill from which it took its name. Abdallah lists ten divisions [3] but we need consider only the four that penetrated into British Nyasaland.

These were:

1. The *Achisi Yao*, who settled at Mchisi hill.
2. The *Amasaninga Yao*, who settled near the Lisaninga hill (near the Lutwisi River in Portuguese East Africa).
3. The *Amangoche Yao*, who settled at Mount Mangoche near Fort Johnston, south of Lake Nyasa.
4. The *Amachinga Yao*, who settled near the Mandimba hill. They are called Amachinga because of the serrated edge of the range in which the Mandimba hill is situated. [*Licinga*—a fence.]

Episode II: The Displacement of the Divisions from their Homes [4]

In time, each of the four sections mentioned found its way into Nyasaland. Briefly the details are:

1. The *Achisi Yao* are represented in Nyasaland by the people under Native Authority Katuli in Fort Johnston district. The 1945 Census showed that there were 12,187 Yao under this chief, i.e. 4·3 per cent of the total Yao population of British Nyasaland. However, not all Yao under Katuli are Achisi Yao, and there are no doubt Achisi Yao elsewhere in small numbers; but even

[1] Abdallah, *Chikala cha Wayao*, 7, edited and translated by Meredith Sanderson as *The History of the Yao*, Government Printer (Zomba, 1919).

[2] Abdallah, *Chikala*, 8. [3] Abdallah, *Chikala*, 9.

[4] For information on areas which I did not visit I have drawn heavily from the Administrative file 'Historical Notes on Districts'.

3: Stanmus D-5 (ca. 1912) 1922 FT7 Yao FT7

114 southern part of that territory by Dr. Karl Weule. I have not had access to Weule's official reports but judging from Miss Werner's translation of his popular edition,[1] the book shows a good deal of evidence of inaccurate information, or perhaps it would be better to say, evidence of want of extensive observation, and all the strictures which his translator passes upon the book[2] are well deserved. I am inclined to think that much of what Weule describes in connection with various tribes including the Wayao bears witness to considerable modification by intermixture, and it may be interesting to compare his account of Yao customs with my own.

Duff Macdonald,[3] then, remains the one author whose writings are of value to the student of the Wayao of Nyasaland, and one cannot help feeling that the ethnological character of his book suffers from the attitude which he, in common with most missionaries, takes in regard to many native customs. I believe that if missionaries, instead of turning away their faces in horror, had regarded these practices with an open mind, they would have found that their veiled statements were exaggerations of the truth, and that the old social code of the Yao native would compare favorably with the order of things in most civilised countries.

Morals are after all only the laws that regulate the social welfare of a community and there can be no theoretically perfect code of morals which does not take into consideration the living conditions of the community to which it is applied. Before the ties of custom which bound their social system were cut by European government and missionary influence, I think the natives of Nyasaland sinned against their code of morals comparatively seldom. The present time is one of transition. Freed from old customs and beliefs, and with nothing of equal strength to take their place, the younger generation of natives has suffered and only time with just rule and efficient education can raise them to the higher moral standard which European influence strives to impose upon them.

The old order is passing rapidly and I therefore make no apologies for recording my observations, since the time will soon come when the things I speak of will be entirely forgotten. I find I have gone over much of the ground covered by Macdonald, but in most cases, I believe that I can add many details which may be of value to ethnologists.

● 101 **Divisions and History of the Wayao.** In regard to the question of tribal names, I think it is perhaps better to reserve the word *Wayao* to denote the whole Yao family and give to each section of the tribe the designation by which it is known to all its members. Thus the name Amangoche should be applied to the Yao people settled around Blantyre, while the Yao about whom I shall speak belong to that branch of the tribe known as Amachinga, now living near Zomba under their chief, Malemya. These two sections, together with a third, to the north, the Amasininga, contain all the Yao of Nyasaland. (Pl. IX)

[1] Karl Weule, Native Life in East Africa, tr. by Alice Werner, London, 1908.
[2] Ibid., p. xiii–xiv.
[3] Op. cit.

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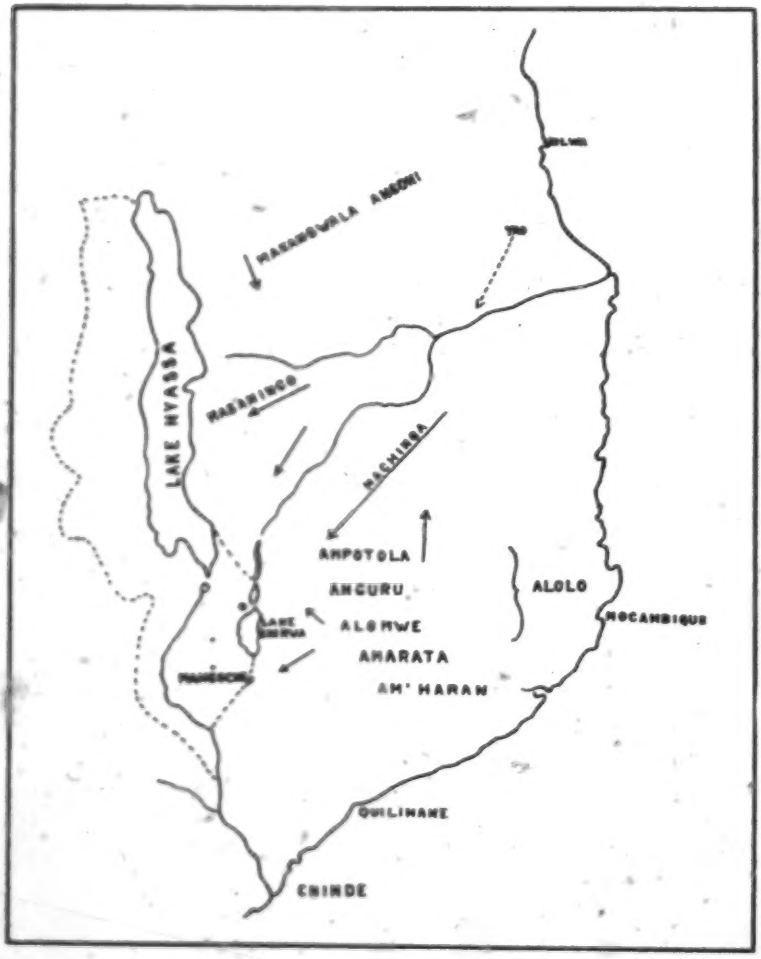

Distribution of the Yao in Nyasaland

[End Plate 9]

8:Mitchell E-5 (1946-1947) 1949 FT7 Yao FT7

[P.141A]

THE POLITICAL ORGANIZATION OF THE YAO OF SOUTHERN NYASALAND[1]

J. CLYDE MITCHELL

I. OUTLINE OF THE GENERAL CULTURAL BACKGROUND

[1] I have been helped and stimulated in the preparation of this paper by my colleagues of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, Dr. E. Colson and Mr. J. A. Barnes and by the staff of the Institute of Social Anthropology, Oxford, Prof. E. E. Evans-Pritchard, Dr. M. Fortes and Dr. Max Gluckman. I am especially indebted to Dr. Max Gluckman who was Director of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute when I joined it, and who gave much of his time to clarifying and developing the presentation of this paper.

[101]

[2] Mainly Yao, Nguru and Nyanja. The proportions are given in Table 1 and their relations briefly discussed later (p. 16). In general their cultural backgrounds are similar and what I have said of the Yao is true of the others.

[3] "The Outline of the Social Organization of the Yao of Southern Nyasaland" in *Seven Tribes of British Central Africa*, ed. E. Colson, (London : Oxford University Press, forthcoming).

[4] The position of the village headman in the internal structure of Yao villages is more fully described in my contribution to the symposium, "The Village Headman in British Central Africa " (with M. GLUCKMAN and J. A. BARNES, *Africa*, 19/1, January 1949.

8:Mitchell E-5 (1946-1947) 1949
FT7 Yao FT7

[P. 141 B]

101 The people with whom this paper is concerned [2] occupy that part of Nyasaland between the Chikala Range in the South; Mount Mangoche in the North; the Shire River to the West; and the Portuguese East African border to the East. This area is represented on the accompanying diagrammatic map. A more detailed description of the general social organization of the Yao in this area, and of their history and general cultural background is to be published shortly. [3] At 361 this point it is sufficient to say that the Yao are semi-subsistence cultivators living in village settlements ranging from a few huts to sixty or more, with an average of about twelve. This represents say a population average of about 40 per village but ranging from 15 to over 200. 621 These village settlements are inhabited by groups 611 of kinsmen. In general there is a matrilineal core of kinsmen of whom the village headman, who 622 has the same name as the village, is one. In some more complex villages there are subsidiary matrilineages related to the matrilineal core agnatically

8:Mitchell E-5 (1946-1947) 1949
[P.1458] FT7 Yao FT7

III. The Entry OF THE WHITES

175 British started actively to pacify the country, the
648 sons of Mponda were at war with each other and Cingwalungwalu was on the way to dominating the whole of the west of the Shire River bank above the Murchison falls. After the British had demonstrated their efficiency by a few attacks on some of Nkata's forces, Kalembo approached the British leader and complained of the war in his territory. The British forces accordingly attacked and destroyed Cingwalungwalu's forces thereby leaving the way open for Kalembo to establish himself under the British wing as an important chief of the west bank of Lake Malombe. Amongst the chieftancies studied in this paper there appeared to have been no direct use of the British military forces in internal politics.[1] The Whites in this way immediately became a factor in tribal political organization. First of all some chiefs endeavoured to use the military force of the Whites directly in their tribal politics. Later on as military actions came to an end the power of the Whites continued to be tapped by chiefs and other personalities in the political structure in order to manipulate the tribal political set-up to their own advantage. In the main the power of the British Administration though still an active agent in tribal politics is now present as an abstract and invisible but nonetheless potent force. How this is done to-day I hope to be able to show by an analysis of the interaction of chiefs, African civil servants and village headmen.

101 As a foundation to this view of Yao politics,
175 the detailed history of the three chieftains Ka-
619 winga, Liwonde and Nyambi is illuminating.
643 Kawinga, Liwonde and Nyambi all belong to the same division of the Yao tribe, i.e. Macinga. There are about nine such divisions but only four are to be found in Nyasaland. The Acisi live near the Portuguese East African border in the Fort Johnston area (Katuli's area) and the

101 619 175 643 Amasininga in the Makanjila area of Fort Johnston District, i.e. to the east of the south end of the Lake near Fort Maguire. These two divisions are insignificant when compared with the other two divisions in Nyasaland. The third division is the Mangoce Yao now settled around Blantyre, while the last division, the Macinga, are settled between Fort Johnston district and Zomba. These divisions arose from a breaking up of the Yao tribe which originally occupied the territory between the Rovuma and Lujenda Rivers in what is now Portuguese East Africa. These divisions are not very significant to-day. Members of a division recognize that they are more closely related to each other than to the members of another division, but this does not appear to affect modern political life in any way.

619 175 551 643 The first Kawinga, Liwonde and Nkata [1] all belonged to the Macinga division which had settled near the tip of Lake Amaramba where it empties into the Lujenda River. From this place of origin, the groups associated with these early leaders moved into Nyasaland. In addition to belonging to the same division of the Yao tribe the three leaders mentioned also had the same clan-name, viz. *ambeve*. [2] The term that I have translated as clan-name is the Yao word *lukaryo*, which may also be translated as "kind" or "sort". Thus, if one asks a man the "kind" or "sort" of Yao he is, his answer may refer to the major divisions as above, i.e. Macinga or Mangoce or it may refer to the clan-name. Clan-names are inherited matrilineally, but holders of the same name are unable to trace their descent from a common ancestor. People with the same clan-names formerly did not marry but this prohibition has fallen away. For the commoners the clan-name seems to have lost most of its significance but it is carefully remembered in the royal lines and lines in which the rank of a village headman is passed down.

[582]

643 551 175 The present Kawinga and the present Liwonde can trace their descent matrilineally from a com-

9:Lawson Y-S (ca. 1940)1969 FT7 Yao FT7
MARAVI FR4

[P.180B]

Acknowledgements are due to many African friends who have freely given me information, and especially to Mr. Bennett Malekebu.

THE present Bantu population of the Shiré Highlands in South Nyasaland consists of four major groups :

1. The Nyanja tribe, the country's earliest known inhabitants, whose language is closely allied to that of the Sena and Tette people on the Zambesi and the Senga on the Loangwa, but whose origin is uncertain. In 1858 Livingstone found various branches of this tribe settled throughout South Nyasaland.

2. The Yao tribe, numbers of whom between 1860 and 1870 were driven southwards from their home in Portuguese East Africa by the neighbouring Amakua 'Walolo. These fugitive Yao fell upon the unwarlike Nyanja, conquered and subjugated their chiefs, and finally settling among them, intermarried to a certain extent.

3. A sprinkling of Ngoni, that branch of the Zulu whose flight from Chaka, wanderings in East Africa and ultimate settlement in Nyasaland and Portuguese East Africa, are familiar history. In the Shiré Highlands Ngoni are found only in small scattered groups, for their real home is the "Angoni Highlands" of central Nyasaland.

4. Recent immigrants from various tribes in Moçambique, given by Nyanja and Yao the indiscriminate name of "Lomwe", (i.e., possibly, "people from Lomwe Hill") or more rudely, "Nguru", (i.e. "people who speak indistinctly, like drunkards").

This study was made in the district around Zomba and deals exclusively with the Nyanja and YAO TRIBES, WHO THERE PREDOMINATE

9:Lawson Y-5 (ca. 1940)1949 FT7 Yao FT7
MARAVI FR4

[P. 180C]

and Yao tribes, who there predominate. These peoples seem to have come from different parts of the continent. Their languages, despite a common Bantu descent and much recent borrowing, remain as distinct as possible and are obviously not modern dialects of one more primitive tongue ; their original social structures must, however, have been similar enough to attract them to each other, for they have so intermarried and their customs so fused, that one can now scarcely distinguish their ways of life and village organization. Indeed, while homesteads of apparently pure Nyanja and Yao still predominate, every considerable district contains members of both tribes, with some people, at least, of mixed descent ; moreover, and although one perceive a difference of character and manners, and trace it to the influence of Mohammedanism on the Yaos, one may well be unconsciously exaggerating. This account of relationship terms, (with brief reference to underlying social structure), must be taken, therefore, to cover the fusion of two once-separate tribes, and Nyanja and Yao equivalents must—unless otherwise stated—be understood as identical in meaning. In fact, Nyanja often prefer Yao terms to their own.

How far can one isolate the Nyanja-Yao social structure in order to study it ? Ngoni immigrants in this district are few, and their original patrilineal social system has largely succumbed to the customs of these earlier comers. The matrilineal system of the still more recent and numerous Lomwe immigrants is, I believe, (though my evidence is fragmentary), exerting a considerable influence on the somewhat dissimilar but also matrilineal Nyanja and Yao.

11: Sanderson D-5 (ca. 1920) 1920 FT7 Yao FT7

RELATIONSHIPS AMONG THE WAYAO.

By MEREDITH SANDERSON,
Medical Officer, Nyasaland Protectorate.

Introductory.—Various writers have attempted to give English equivalents to the Yao terms describing relationship, or have alluded to the outstanding features of the system, but I am not aware that anybody has hitherto worked out the whole system.

Although it is very similar to other classificatory systems, I feel that a description of it may not be quite valueless, more especially on account of the evolutionary changes that are taking place.

The WaYao are a Bantu tribe, exogamous but not totemic, which until the middle of the last century inhabited that part of Central Africa lying to the East of Lake Nyasa, particularly in the valleys of the Lujenda and Rovuma rivers. Up to that time the tribe had not extended far from the area indicated except perhaps in a northerly direction, but owing to constant internecine war in their own territory the Yaos then invaded and conquered a large part of the neighbouring territories, especially to the south, in what is now called Nyasaland.

I have said that the WaYao are not totemic, and that statement is correct at the present time. Opinions differ, however, as to how recent their loss of totemism is; though their initiation ceremonies are generally regarded as totemic, even there, in my opinion, the evidence is not conclusive, and there remains no suspicion of totemism outside these ceremonies.

It should be mentioned that Islam is much more prevalent among the Yaos than among their neighbours, but its influence is not yet so deep-rooted as greatly to obscure the pure tribal customs, except to a certain extent among the rising generation.

To facilitate description the relationships are given in tabular form, the relationship being given with reference to one man or woman.

In Table I, Column 1 describes the relationship, Column 2 gives either the nearest equivalent of the Yao term, or, if none, the actual terms. Columns 3–9 give the various relations of the person named in Column 1, as they would be named by the man or woman under consideration.

For example, the brother of (*a*)'s father (Column 1) is regarded as (*a*)'s father (Column 2), the wife of (*a*)'s father's brother is (*a*)'s *akwepe* (Column 3), their child a his "brother" or "sister" (Column 4), and so on (see Table I).